

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Workshop Session on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 5:00 PM in the Commission Conference Room, 181 Larkin Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor John Borrow called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, and Tony Cook. Janice Griggs was absent. Also present: City Attorney Steve Campbell, City Manager Donald Anderson, and City Clerk Debbie Turner.

Police Chief Johnathan Roberts was there to discuss the Flock cameras. He said that he had reached out to them, and they would like to install 11 cameras for a 60-day trial period. We are not obligated to purchase them at the end of the trial, but if we do decide to, we will only install four cameras. He said he has researched them for 5 years now, and these cameras are not unlike the BULO that has been in place for 100 years. He said that these cameras only read the tag if they have been entered for a criminal offense, such as a violent crime, an Amber Alert, or a Missing Persons case. It will enable the police department to access data quickly. The information is only stored for 30 days. A case must be entered to access the data. Mayor Borrow asked how many cities and counties are using them. Mr. Roberts said that every county and almost all of the cities around us are using them. The cost of the cameras is \$4,000 per camera each year, and we don't own them; we lease them.

Architect Jay Rienheart and Kenny Miller from Carter & Sloope were present to discuss the amphitheater design. Commissioner Bagwell said it looks terrible and is something that a child would do. They asked what he would like to see, and he said it needs to look like the history of the town. He said it needs to evoke some charm, and he would like to see some stone on the columns, as well as change the appearance of the acoustic panels and maybe add some wood beams. Mr. Rienheart said that anything is possible; it's just a matter of how much money you want to spend. After much discussion on the design, Mayor Borrow said so you are good with the structure, just not the look of it. Commissioner Bagwell said yes, but we live in a train town, and the amphitheater needs to represent that.

Mayor Borrow asked if anyone from the public was going to be here tonight, and City Manager Anderson said that Audrey Davenport wants to speak on the Vibrant Arts Grant that we received.

They discussed the Public Hearing for the Cook Communities annexation. Mayor Borrow said he has heard from many citizens about the impact this will have on the roads and schools. He said that there are valid concerns. City Manager Anderson said this is the kind of growth you want because it is proposed for

Commercial and Industrial use. Mr. Anderson said the development will add about 54 students to the schools, but the county and the school board will get their share of the taxes. He also stated that Mr. Cook has agreed to provide us with land to build a police substation and a firehouse on in the future.

They discussed the remaining items on the agenda.

Commissioner Reed made a motion to enter executive session for real estate, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 3 - 0

Commissioner Reed made a motion to exit the executive session, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 3 - 0

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

CITY OF CORNELIA
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NOVEMBER 4, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in Regular Session on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM in the Cornelia Court Room, 181 Larkin Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor John Borrow called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, and Tony Cook. Janice Griggs was absent. Also present: City Attorney Steve Campbell, City Manager Donald Anderson, and City Clerk Debbie Turner.

Commissioner Bagwell gave the invocation, and Commissioner Cook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Reed made the motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 3 -0

Commissioner Bagwell made the motion to approve the October 7th minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 3 - 0

City Manager's Monthly Report for March 2025

Public Works has begun setting up for Christmas in the Park. Once the park is complete, they will move on to Downtown. Christmas in the Park will begin on Thanksgiving and continue through New Year's Day. The Downtown Tree Lighting Ceremony will be on Saturday, November 29th at 6:30 PM.

We received notice that we have been approved for a Vibrant Communities Grant from the Georgia Arts Association in the amount of \$5,000. The funds will be used to help with the cost of a public art project in Ward 4. I am working with Audrey Davenport, the owner of Soque Street LLC. on this project. Ms. Davenport assisted with the grant application and will serve as the Project Manager and Lead Artist on the project. We would like to paint a mural depicting the history of Ward 4, specifically Soque Street. The mural will be painted on aluminum panels which will be attached to the fence at Jim Smith Park. We are planning to hold a series of meetings with the neighbors to gather input on the project. From the input we receive we will be able to finalize the design for the project.

Artist, Cheyenne Renee, has completed the mural on the side of Cornelia Pharmacy and I think it looks great. This mural is part of a nationwide project called the 50 in 50 Mural Project. The project calls for a mural to be painted in all 50 states. We are the 37th state that she has painted a mural for the project. Once the project is complete, she will release a documentary on the project. She interviewed the mayor and I as well as other members of the community for the documentary. His report is made an integral part of the minutes.

Public Forum - Blaine Wadsen came forward to speak about the Flock Cameras. He said he was in favor of it, but they would need to be used with safe guards in place. He said it is a very powerful tool, but needs to be used in the right way.

Public Hearings

Annexation Request for Cook Construction & Real Estate

Mayor Borrow opened the public hearing and stated that, before we begin, anyone in favor or opposed will have a chance to speak. City Manager Anderson read the annexation request. This is a request by Cook Construction & Real Estate to annex approximately 224.6 acres of land located along Highway 365 South between Level Grove Road and Duncan Bridge Road. The applicant is seeking multiple zoning designations, including a PUD with residential lot sizes of 3,700 square feet, Agriculture, and Highway Business with Conditions. The Conditions will allow for some industrial uses. The Habersham County Commission voted not to object to the annexation request on October 21, 2025. Our Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on this matter on October 23, 2025. Following the Public Hearing they voted to recommend approval of the request. I recommend that you post the Annexation Ordinance for Public Comment. Mr. Anderson stated that tonight nothing will be approved; this is just a vote to post the ordinance for comment.

Attorney Vince Fitzgerald for Cook Communities came forward to give the proposal for the development. He stated that he represented Owners Jeff Cook and co-owner Keith Cook. Mr. Fitzgerald gave an overview of the company and said that they work with local government partners to provide better communities. He presented a map with an aerial view and said that it starts just north of J. Warren Road. And ends at Duncan Bridge Road. The slides will show how this project aligns with the City's Urban Redevelopment Plan and Comprehensive Plan, for the city's long-term goals for the area. He read the Comprehensive Plan Mission Statement and confirmed that this project will comply with it. He stated that this development will provide affordable housing, commercial growth, and entertainment options. He stated that this also fits within the Comprehensive Plan for Industrial growth and job creation. Mr. Fitzgerald went on to discuss how this development will meet all the requirements outlined in the Urban Redevelopment Plan and the Comprehensive Growth Plan. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if anyone had any questions. Commissioner Cook stated he was glad to see it.

Tracy Robar from 242 Chenocetah Court read a prepared statement opposing the development of over 200 acres from J Warren Road to Duncan Bridge Road. She said that residents were correct in that we do not have the infrastructure for this development. She said that we have said they could start building today, but she thinks this is a lack of accountability on the part of the county and the city. Looking south, it has created massive traffic growth, increasing crime, homeless camps, overloading health facilities, and raising taxes. She stated that those residents didn't want it, and we don't want it either. She went on to voice her opposition to the development and ask that we keep our town small. Mayor Borrow thanked her for coming.

Michelle Chitwood from 110 Memory Hill Circle stated that she has lived there for 55 years and does not want to see this happen. She drives a school bus for the school system and works at Habersham Central School. She said she knows what the buses are like as well as the school system and we are overtaxing every element of the school system now. She said there is no more room for any students in any of the schools. She said every day she has to smell sewer coming from the WWTP plant and there is no way that they can handle any more that this development would bring. She claimed that they are already flushing it down the creek. Mayor Borrow said that we can't do that because we follow EPD guidelines, and that is a federal law. Mayor Borrow thanked her for coming.

Emily Herrin came from J. Warren Road to speak on the noise ordinance. She said if this development goes through, it will sit right next to her property. She said we have farm animals. She is concerned that we will receive complaints claiming it is coming from her property. Mayor John Borrow stated that she lives in the county, which is not within our jurisdiction. He thanked her for coming.

Mayor Borrow asked if anyone else wanted to speak. No one else came forward and Mayor Borrow closed the Public Hearing. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to post the annexation for comment, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 3 - 0

New Business

Audrey Davenport of Soque Street LLC came forward to speak about the Vibrant Communities Arts Grant, which we received for \$5,000. She said that she was honored when City Manager Anderson asked her to be the project manager. This project will represent Historical Ward 4, the most diverse ward in the City of Cornelia. Ms. Davenport said that she will work with City Manager Anderson to hold town hall meetings to get public feedback. Commissioner Reed asked where

the meetings would take place. Mr. Anderson said that the Community House, Ballard Center, and the schools. She thanked the Mayor and Commissioners for their time. Mayor Borrow thanked her for coming.

Resolution to Adopt Language Action Plan

A condition of the FY 25 CDBG Award is to have a Language Action Plan available to the public. This resolution adopts the attached Language Action Plan to be used by the city until 2030. The City Manager recommended approval of the resolution adopting this updated Language Action plan. Commissioner Reed, made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 3 - 0

Agreement for Flock Safety Camera 60 Day Trial

Recently a few local businesses and apartment complexes have installed and launched FLOCK cameras to help deter crime. This tool is used by 4,000 agencies and over 5,200 businesses and communities nationwide. As our city grows and advances, so will crime. Unfortunately, because we are not an end user of FLOCK, our very own police department is not able to provide the services that come with this technology and currently must rely on outside agencies to share information. This information can only be shared through an official request, extending the time it takes to get needed information. All surrounding counties and numerous local municipalities are already on board with this technology and have seen great success. FLOCK was used to track down the killer of the person that was dumped near Lowes in 2024 as well as the young lady that was murdered and dumped near Wal-Mart here in Cornelia. Because we don't have FLOCK what could have taken minutes to hours, ended up taking days. For this reason, we have reached out to Flock regarding the possibility of the city installing some cameras of our own. Once we have an account with Flock, we will have access to all Flock cameras. They have agreed to install 11 cameras around the city on a 60-day trial basis. At the end of the trial, we are not obligated to purchase any of the cameras. The City Manager recommended that we participate in the trial to see if we are interested in purchasing any cameras for the city. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to enter into the trial period, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 3 - 0

Development Assistance Real Property Interest Acquisition Ordinance

This ordinance sets requirements before the City considers securing property interests for an approved development by eminent domain. The City Manager recommended that this ordinance be posted for public comment. Commissioner Reed

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made a motion to post the ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 3 - 0

Arbor Day Proclamation

We will celebrate Arbor Day on February 20, 2026. This resolution declares February 20, 2026, Arbor Day in Cornelia. Commissioner Reed made a motion to have the Mayor sign the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 3 - 0

Executive Session for Real Estate - Held in the Work Session meeting.

No Action Taken!

Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 3 - 0

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

CITY OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA

AFFIDAVIT OF PRESIDING OFFICIAL(S) FOR A CLOSED PUBLIC MEETING

While in Regular Session, the motion was made to enter an Executive Session to discuss certain matters in a closed session.

() To discuss with the council pending and/or potential litigation, settlement claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions, which is exempt from the Open Meetings Act pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-2(1).

() A meeting to discuss the purchase, disposal of, or lease of property; authorize the ordering of an appraisal related to the acquisition or disposal of real estate; enter into a contract to purchase, dispose of, or lease property subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; or enter into an option to purchase, dispose of, or lease real estate subject to approval in subsequent public vote, which is excluded from the Open Meetings Act pursuant to Section 50-14-3(b)(1)(C).

() A meeting discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee, which is excluded pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-3(b)(2).

() Discussion in Executive Session of Records that are otherwise protected from disclosure under the Open Records Act as pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-3- (b)(4).

X The subject matter of the Executive Session of the Regular Session was devoted to matters within the exceptions provided by law.

Because of events occurring during the closed session, I am unable to affirm the subject matter of the Executive Session of the Regular Session was devoted to only matters within the exceptions provided by law.

John Borrow, Mayor, City of Cornelia

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
November 4, 2025

Notary Public